

FAMILIES AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS IN 2002

Many businesses are interested in information about living arrangements because household composition is associated with the consumption of goods and services. State and local governments pay attention to households when making decisions about issues such as traffic patterns and school lunch programs. A broad spectrum of decision makers want to understand how the characteristics of families and living arrangements have changed over the decades.

While many adults live alone, the majority still live with a spouse. Some live with grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, and other relatives, and others live with people who are not related to them by birth or

marriage. Living arrangements of children are also of interest to educators and service providers.

Families

Families represented 81 percent of households in 1970 and 68 percent of America's 109.3 million households in 2002, according to the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS).¹ See Figure 1. Between 1970 and 2002,

¹ The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. For more information on the accuracy of the data, see Appendix A.

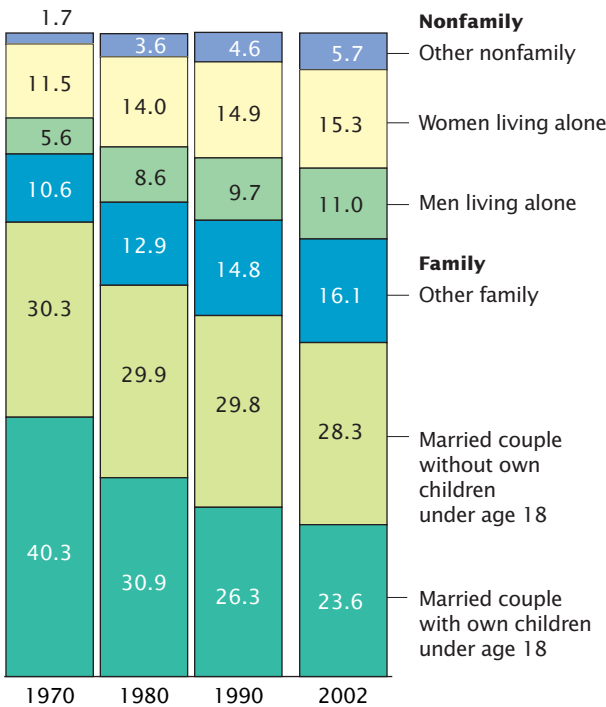
Words That Count

A **household** consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit, regardless of their relationship. In a **family household**, at least one member is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. A **nonfamily household** can either be a person living alone or a householder who shares the home with nonrelatives only—for example, boarders or roommates. A **subfamily** is a family living within another household unit. They may be part of a family household regardless of their relationship to the householder. They may also be part of a nonfamily household if they are not related to the householder. For instance, a mother and child living in the home of an unrelated single friend would be a subfamily within a nonfamily household. A subfamily may be a married couple or a parent and a child.

Householder refers to the person (or one of the people) in whose name a housing unit is owned, rented, or maintained. If the house is owned or rented jointly by a married couple, the householder may be either the husband or the wife.

Marital status includes the following categories: never married, married, separated, widowed, and divorced. For the purpose of this report, the term "unmarried" includes never married, widowed, and divorced.

Figure 1.
Households by Type: 1970 to 2002
(Percent distribution)



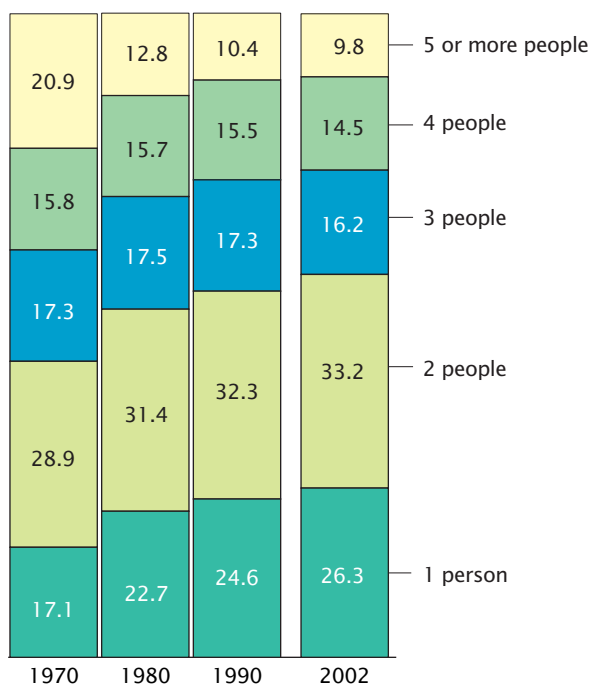
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2002.

married-couple families with children fell from 40 percent of all households to 24 percent. The share of married couples without children remained relatively stable, accounting for 30 percent of all households in 1970 and 28 percent in 2002. The percentage of other families, including those with no spouse present, rose from 11 percent to 16 percent over that same time period.

From 1970 to 2002, people living alone grew from 17 percent of all households to 26 percent. At the same time, women living alone decreased from 67 percent of one-person households to 58 percent. Other nonfamily households, people who live with nonrelatives only, grew from less than 2 percent to nearly 6 percent of all households.

Households decreased in size between 1970 and 2002, as shown in Figure 2. The share of households with five or more people dropped from 21 percent to 10 percent of all households. Those with one or two members grew from 46 percent to 59 percent of all households. In 2002, the average number of people per household was 2.58, compared with 3.14 in 1970.

Figure 2.
Households by Size: 1970 to 2002
(Percent distribution)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2002.

Unmarried-couple households composed of unmarried partners of the opposite sex represented 4 percent of all households in 2002.² In 58 percent of these households, the householder had never been married. In another 32 percent, the householder was divorced. Forty-one percent of unmarried-couple households contained children under 18 years of age. Unmarried-partner households may be classified as family or non-family households, depending on whether or not someone in the household is related to the householder by blood or adoption.

The Postponement of Marriage

One reason that nonfamily households have increased is the postponement of marriage. In 1970, the median age at first marriage was 21 for women and 23 for men.³ By 2002, the median had risen to 25 for women and 27 for men.

Delayed marriage has contributed to increases in the percentages of young men and women who have never married. The proportion of never-married women aged 25 to 34 increased between 1970 and 2002, from 9 percent to 31 percent. Among men this age, the share rose from 15 percent to 43 percent. The majority of men and women do marry. Among those 35 to 44 in 2002, 81 percent of men and 87 percent of women had been married at least once.

Marriage and Divorce Patterns

In 2002, 55 percent of men aged 18 to 24 lived at home with one or both parents.⁴ Forty-six percent of women this age also lived at home with at least one parent. Marriage was the most common type of living arrangement for people 25 to 34. In 2002, 48 percent of men and 56 percent of women in this age group were married and living with their spouse.

Differences in living arrangements also occur among older adults and are frequently related to differences in life expectancy.⁵ Among people 75 and older in 2002, men were more likely than women to be living with a spouse—68 percent, compared with 29 percent

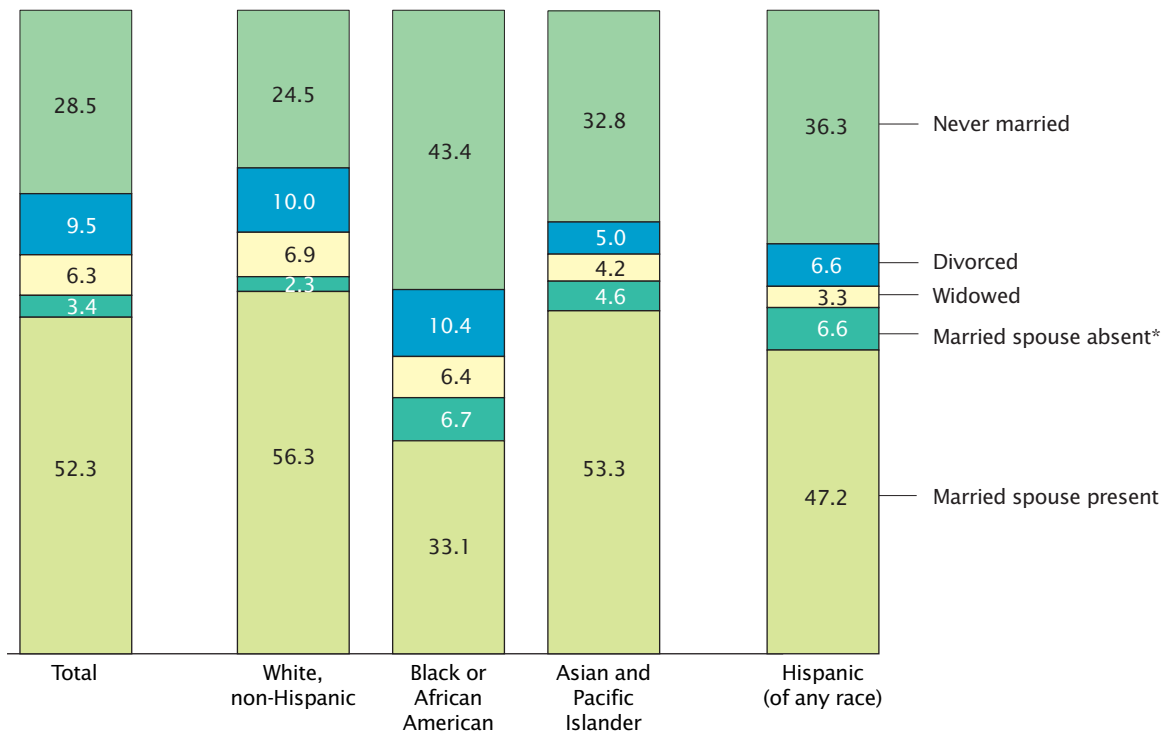
² This number may underrepresent the true number of cohabitating couples because only householders and their partners are tabulated, not all unmarried couples within the household. Same-sex unmarried partners are also excluded from these estimates. Further, respondents may be reluctant to classify themselves as cohabitating couples in a personal interview.

³ Median age at first marriage in this report is calculated indirectly by estimating the proportion of young people who will marry during their lifetime, calculating one-half of this proportion, and determining by interpolation the age (at the time of the survey) of people at this halfway mark. The figures do not represent the actual median age of the population who married during the year.

⁴ Excludes individuals who were also in related subfamilies.

⁵ For more information, see the chapter on older adults.

Figure 3.
Marital Status of People 15 Years and Older by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2002
 (Percent distribution)



*Includes separated.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2002.

for women. Fifty percent of women in this age group were living alone, compared with 22 percent of men.

Marital Status by Race and Hispanic Origin⁶

Among people 15 and older in 2002, non-Hispanic Whites and Asians and Pacific Islanders were the most likely to be married and living with a spouse, 56 percent and 53 percent, respectively (Figure 3). The proportion married and living with a spouse was 33 percent for Blacks and 46 percent for Hispanics.⁷

The percentage of people 15 and older who were divorced was highest for Blacks (10.4 percent) and

non-Hispanic Whites (10.0 percent) and lowest for Asians and Pacific Islanders (5.0 percent). Seven percent of Hispanics were divorced. Twenty-five percent of non-Hispanic Whites had never been married, compared with 33 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders and 43 percent of Blacks. Among Hispanics this age, 36 percent had never been married.

Family households made up 81 percent of Hispanic households, compared with 68 percent of all households in 2002.⁸ The corresponding proportions were 73 percent for Asian and Pacific Islander households and 66 percent for Black and non-Hispanic White households. Average family household size was 2.99 for non-Hispanic Whites, compared with 3.35 for Blacks, 3.44 for Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 3.86 for Hispanics.

⁶ Age distribution influences marital status by race and Hispanic origin. For more information, see the chapter on race and Hispanic origin.

⁷ Because Hispanics may be any race, data for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black and the Asian and Pacific Islander populations. Based on the total male and female populations surveyed in the 2002 CPS ASEC, 3.7 percent of the Black population and 4.3 percent of the Asian and Pacific Islander population were also Hispanic. Data are not shown for the American Indian and Alaska Native population because of the small sample size in the 2002 CPS ASEC.

⁸ The race or origin of the household is based on the race or origin of the householder, regardless of the race or origin of the other household members. Data in this chapter describe households with a householder who reported only one race.

Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces (1996)

Data from the 1996 Panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) help explain marriage patterns today. The SIPP tracks marriages that were entered into decades ago.

Comparing marriage and divorce rates among younger men (those born from 1955 to 1964) and older men (those born from 1925 to 1934) reveals some interesting contrasts. The data show that the proportion of men married by age 25 dropped from 68 percent for older men to 49 percent for younger men.

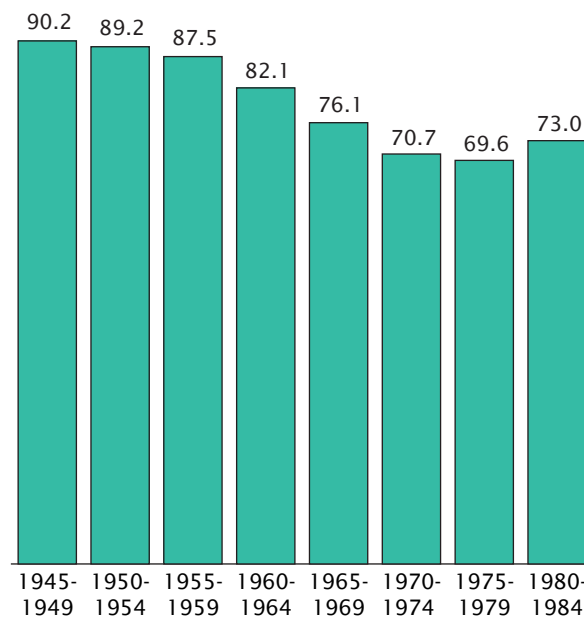
Among women who first married in the late 1940s, 90 percent reached their 10th anniversary, 81 percent their 20th, and 70 percent their 30th anniversary. Among those first married from 1950 to 1964, 55 percent had a 30th wedding anniversary. Fifty-six percent of those first married in the early 1970s celebrated a 20th

anniversary. Seventy-three percent of women first married in the early 1980s were still with their first

husband 10 years later, as shown in Figure 4.

By age 40, about 15 percent of men and women born from 1925 to 1934 had been divorced, compared with 31 percent of those born from 1945 to 1954. The rise in divorce also means that a higher percentage of people were more likely to be married more than once during their lifetimes. Among men born from 1925 to 1934, 11 percent had been married two or more times by age 40. Among those born from 1945 to 1954, 22 percent had been married multiple times. Data for women born during the same time periods showed a similar pattern. While 12 percent of the older group had been married at least twice by age 40, the proportion for the younger group was 23 percent.

Figure 4.
Percentage of Women Whose First Marriage Reached Its Tenth Anniversary by Year of Marriage: Fall 1996



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Panel, Wave 2.

The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

For more detailed information, consult the following U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports: *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2000* (P20-537) by Jason Fields, and *Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 1996* (P70-80) by Rose M. Kreider and Jason M. Fields.

Look for complete reports and detailed tables on the Census Bureau's Web site <www.census.gov>.

Click on "H" and select "Households and Families Data" or "M" and select "Marital Status and Living Arrangements Data."

Contact the Census Bureau's Customer Service Center at 301-763-INFO (4636) or e-mail <pop@census.gov>.